

Message Text

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44

ACTION AF-08

INFO OCT-01 EUR-12 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-04 H-02

INR-07 L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01 PRS-01 SP-02 SS-15

USIA-06 IO-13 /080 W

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R 081119Z JUL 76

FM AMEMBASSY OUAGADOUGOU

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 1879

INFO AMEMBASSY ABIDJAN

AMEMBASSY BAMAKO

AMEMBASSY CONAKRY

AMEMBASSY DAKAR

AMEMBASSY LOME

AMEMBASSY NIAMEY

AMEMBASSY PARIS

C O N F I D E N T I A L OUAGADOUGOU 2086

EO 11652: GDS

TAGS: PBOR ML UV

SUBJECT: MALI-UPPER VOLTA BORDER DISPUTE

REF: A)BAMAKO 2321 B) OUAGADOUGOU 2083

1. WHILE IT WOULD BE TEMPTING, IN VIEW OF ENTHUSIASTIC PUBLIC DECLARATIONS FROM BOTH SIDES, TO TAKE POSITION THAT BORDER DISPUTE BETWEEN MALI AND UPPER VOLTA HAS BEEN SETTLED, FACT IS THAT NOTHING HAS BEEN SETTLED OFFICIALLY AND THAT MANY VOLTANS, INCLUDING PRESIDENT LAMIZANA, ARE FEARFUL THAT DISPUTE WILL ERUPT AGAIN IN FUTURE WHEN UPPER VOLTA HAS BROUGHT ITS GUARD DOWN.

2. INFORMATION FROM VARIOUS SOURCES HERE INDICATES THAT ENTIRE CONTESTED AREA IS NOW CONTROLLED AND OCCUPIED BY VOLTAN ARMY WITH TACIT CONCURRENCE OF MALIAN AUTHORITIES IN SPITE OF RECOMMENDATIONS OF LOME MEDIATION COMMISSION THAT BOTH ARMIES REMAIN OUTSIDE OF CONTESTED AREA.

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3. MALIAN STRATEGY AT THIS POINT APPEARS TO BE TO SWEEP

ENTIRE PROBLEM UNDER THE RUG WITHOUT ANY FORMAL DECLARATION AND TO KEEP OAU MEDIATION COMMISSION OUT OF IT. PRESIDENT LAMIZANA, HOWEVER, TENDS TO BE MORE CAUTIOUS. HE REPORTEDLY VIEWS CURRENT MALIAN CONCILIATORY GESTURES AS SIMPLE RECOGNITION ON MALI'S PART THAT VOLTAN ARMY, NOW REPORTEDLY 9,000 STRONG AND RELATIVELY WELL ARMED, CAN NO LONGER BE EASILY DEFEATED AS IT WAS IN DEC 1974. IT SHOULD BE NOTED THAT NO SIGNIFICANT DEMOBILIZATION HAS TAKEN PLACE WITHIN VOLTAN ARMY IN SPITE OF WIDE SPREAD RUMORS SEVERAL MONTHS AGO THAT SIZE OF ARMY WOULD BE REDUCED TO 6,000 MEN.

4. THAT THERE IS A STRONG DESIRE ON PART OF GOUV OFFICIALS TO PUT AN END TO BORDER DISPUTE AND CONCENTRATE GOVT'S AND PEOPLE'S EFFORTS AND RESOURCES ON ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT IS EVIDENT. THE MOMENT, THEREFORE, APPEARS PROPITIOUS FOR AN ACCOMMODATION WHICH MIGHT CONSIST OF A JOINT DECLARATION WITNESSED BY REPRESENTATIVES OF THE FOUR POWERS INVOLVED IN THE MEDIATION COMMISSION. IT SEEMS CERTAIN THAT, AS A MINIMUM, PRESIDENT LAMIZANA WOULD INSIST ON THE INVOLVEMENT OF THE OAU MEDIATION COMMISSION IN ANY FINAL SETTLEMENT. MEANWHILE, AS INDICATED IN REF B NEGOTIONS CONTINUE AND DOUKARA IS EXPECTED TO VISIT UPPER VOLTA IN NEAR FUTURE. PERHAPS DURING HIS VISIT, A MEETING OF THE TWO CHIEFS OF STATE WILL BE ARRANGED, AFTER WHICH IT MIGHT BE APPROPRIATE FOR USG TO TAKE POSITION THAT BORDER DISPUTE HAS BEEN SETTLED.
GRAHAM

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